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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VATICAN 003638

SIPDIS

AF FOR A/S KANSTEINER, EUR FOR DAS BRADTKE, EUR/WE (MENNUTI)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/22/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [VT](#) [VTPREL](#)

SUBJECT: CHURCH IN AFRICA: CONFRONTING FUNDAMENTALISM;
PROMOTING RECONCILIATION, REFORM

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR JIM NICHOLSON, REASON E.O. 12958 1.5
(B,D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: SECRETARY FOR THE CONGREGATION FOR THE
EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES ARCHBISHOP ROBERT SARAH OFFERED DCM
A TOUR D'HORIZON OF THE CHURCH'S CONCERNS IN AFRICA DURING A
JULY 23 CALL. SARAH FOCUSED ON THE "NEW" CHALLENGE FROM
FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAM, CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE GREAT LAKES
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COUNTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT/HEALTH ISSUES. SARAH ENDED WITH AN
APPEAL TO THE U.S., AS THE WORLD'S LEADER, TO DO EVERYTHING
IN ITS POWER TO SUPPORT AFRICAN PEACE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.
END SUMMARY.

SUDAN AND THE FUNDAMENTALIST CHALLENGE

12. (C) DURING A JULY 21 COURTESY CALL, SECRETARY OF THE
PONTIFICAL CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PEOPLES
ARCHBISHOP ROBERT SARAH OFFERED HIS VIEWS ON A WIDE RANGE OF
ISSUES FACING THE CHURCH IN AFRICA. SARAH, FROM GUINEA, TOLD
US HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A BISHOPS' CONFERENCE MEETING IN
ADDIS ABABA, WHERE THE BISHOPS HAD EXPRESSED STRONG CONCERN
AT THE CONTINUED PROBLEMS OF CONFLICT AND UNDER-DEVELOPMENT
IN EAST AFRICA AND SUDAN. SARAH REPORTED THE SUDANESE
BISHOPS CHARACTERIZED THE SUDAN SITUATION AS GRIM, WITH
ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS CONTINUING TO DE-HUMANIZE CHRISTIANS
AND OTHER NON-MUSLIM PEOPLES AS "DOGS, GOOD ONLY TO BE
BURNED." HE SAID THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT IS BITTERLY
ANTAGONISTIC TO CHRISTIANS, AND HE DID NOT SEE ANY HOPE FOR
AN END TO THEIR HOSTILITY. AS A RESULT, HE DIDN'T SEE ANY
OTHER SOLUTION THAN SEPARATION OF SUDAN INTO TWO COUNTRIES
(NOTE: THIS IS NOT THE OFFICIAL VATICAN POSITION, WHICH
SUPPORTS DIALOGUE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH
SUDAN. FURTHERMORE, OUR CONVERSATION OCCURRED AFTER THE
AGREEMENT ON THE MACHAKOS PROTOCOL, YET SARAH DID NOT
ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT PRESENTED A REAL SOLUTION END NOTE.)

13. (C) PICKING UP ON A THEME WE HAVE HEARD FREQUENTLY IN
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PAST MONTHS, SARAH SEE A GROWING CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH IN
AFRICA FROM ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS. STARTING IN SUDAN,
YOUNGER, GULF-EDUCATED ISLAMIC ACTIVISTS HAVE BEEN SPREADING
MONEY THROUGHOUT SAHELIAN, EAST AND WEST AFRICA IN RECENT
YEARS. THEIR MESSAGE IS THAT CHRISTIANITY IS A FOREIGN,
HIERARCHICAL, RELIGION AND THAT ISLAM IS AN INDIGENOUS
RELIGION MORE IN TUNE WITH AFRICAN TRADITIONS. SARAH SAID THE
CHURCH DOESN'T HAVE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO COMPETE WITH
THESE GULF-FINANCED FUNDAMENTALISTS IN PROVIDING CASH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES. THE CHURCH'S ONLY HOPE TO COUNTER THESE
INFLUENCES WAS THROUGH EDUCATION. THE ISLAMIC
FUNDAMENTALISTS HAVE MADE THEIR GREATEST GAINS AMONG THE
UNEDUCATED, BUT THE CHURCH'S SCHOOLS, -- THOUGH UNDER-FUNDED
-- WOULD TRY TO HELP PEOPLE DISCERN THE DANGERS INHERENT IN
THE FUNDAMENTALIST PATH. (COMMENT: IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS
WITH SARAH, HE, LIKE OUR OTHER INTERLOCUTORS OF AFRICAN
ORIGIN, HAD BEEN MUCH LESS CONCERNED WITH THE ISLAMIC
CHALLENGE. HE AND THEY HAD FOCUSED ON BASIC PROBLEMS OF
DEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION. HE NOW SEEMS TO SHARE
THE SAME CONCERNS AS HIS EUROPEAN CURIAL COLLEAGUES, WHO HAVE
BEEN AVIDLY RE-READING HUNTINGTON'S CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS
SINCE 09/11. END COMMENT.)

14. (C) SARAH WAS QUICK TO UNDERSCORE THAT THE CHURCH'S
CENTURIES LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA'S "INTEGRATED"
ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES HAS BEEN POSITIVE. HE NOTED THE
BASICALLY GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES IN
MAJORITY-MUSLIM COUNTRIES SUCH AS SENEGAL AND CHAD. YET, EVEN
THERE HE FEARED FOR A FUTURE IN WHICH WAHABBI-IST ARAB
PROSELYTIZING COULD LEAD TO VIOLENT INTER-COMMUNAL CONFLICT.

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PROMOTING RECONCILIATION IN THE GREAT LAKES

15. (SBU) RESPONDING TO A QUERY ABOUT HIS PREVIOUS FOCUS ON RWANDAN EXCESSES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), SARAH TOLD US HE HAD MET WITH RWANDAN PRESIDENT KAGAME IN KIGALI IN LATE MAY. THE ASSOCIATION OF BISHOPS' CONFERENCES IN CENTRAL AFRICA (ACEAC IN ITS FRENCH ACRONYM) ORGANIZED A SERIES OF MEETINGS CULMINATING IN A PLENARY WITH KAGAME IN LATE MAY. THE ACEAC HAD DECIDED TO CONDUCT A SERIES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS IN THE THREE COUNTRIES OF THE ASSOCIATION, TO DEMONSTRATE TO CITIZENS OF THE GREAT LAKES CONFLICT ZONE THE POSSIBILITY OF RECONCILIATION. THEY DISCUSSED WITH KAGAME THE NEED FOR ACTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION SO THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD BE ABLE TO FACE THEIR MAJOR HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES. SARAH REPORTED THAT KAGAME TOLD THE BISHOPS HE WAS READY TO CONSIDER POSITIVELY THEIR SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO PROCEED. THE BISHOPS ARE DRAFTING A DOCUMENT FOR KAGAME THAT SHOULD BE READY BEFORE SEPTEMBER.

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AF-00 AMAD-00 EVG-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00
INL-00 DODE-00 DS-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 VCE-00
M-00 NSAE-00 IRM-00 EPAE-00 DSCC-00 DRL-02 SAS-00
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RWANDA COLLECTIVE

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REFORM IS A TWO-WAY STREET

16. (U) TURNING THE DISCUSSION TO AFRICA'S PROBLEMS OF REFORM, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE HIV/AIDS CRISIS, SARAH UNDERLINED THE CHURCH'S FUNDAMENTAL VIEW THAT THE DEVELOPED
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WORLD MUST ALSO LOOK TO ITS OWN RESPONSIBILITIES. ON CORRUPTION, FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID AFRICAN OFFICIALS ARE WORKING IN A "ZONA SPORCA" OR FILTHY ENVIRONMENT. THEY WOULDN'T HAVE CORRUPT MONEY IF EQUALLY CORRUPT BUSINESSMEN WEREN'T GIVING IT TO THEM. HE WAS ENCOURAGED TO HEAR OF U.S. LAWS CONSTRAINING U.S. FIRMS FROM OFFERING BRIBES, AND AGREED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ENSURING THAT THE WESTERN NATIONS DEVELOPED SIMILAR PRACTICES. THE CHURCH'S OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS ON DEVELOPMENT CONDEMN CORRUPTION AND INSIST ON REFORMS PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN RECIPIENT COUNTRIES. BUT, ACCORDING TO THE DOCTRINE OF "SOCIAL GOODS," SARAH SAID DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ALSO HAVE A DUTY TO LIVE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE DEVELOPING WORLD. THIS MEANS HELPING THEM WITH RELIEF ASSISTANCE AS NEEDED, HELPING THEM TO BUILD CAPACITY, AND OFFERING THEM ACCESS TO DEVELOPED MARKETS AND FINANCE. HE REGARDED SUPPORT FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR INCREASED EDUCATION AND TREATMENT AS ESSENTIAL TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS. BUT THE MOST URGENT TASK WAS, SARAH INSISTED, TO END THE CONFLICTS CURRENTLY PLAGUING AFRICA, WITHOUT WHICH LITTLE PROGRESS WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THE UNITED STATES "HAS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AS THE GREATEST POWER ON EARTH, TO STEP UP TO THESE CHALLENGES AND LEAD THE DEVELOPED WORLD TO GREATER SOLIDARITY WITH THE LESS FORTUNATE," HE CONCLUDED.

COMMENT

17. (C) THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES IS ONE OF THE HOLY SEE'S OLDEST AND LARGEST CONGREGATIONS. IT MANAGES THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES AROUND THE
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WORLD IN COUNTRIES THAT HAVE NOT HISTORICALLY BEEN CHRISTIAN. IT ENJOYS STRONG FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM DIOCESES IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD, AND THUS IS ONE OF THE "RICHEST" DICASTRIES.

IN PAST CONVERSATIONS OUR INTERLOCUTORS HAVE FOCUSED WITH EVIDENT PRIDE ON THE LARGE SOCIAL SERVICE PRESENCE OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA. MORE THAN ONE HAS SAID THE CHURCH PROVIDES MORE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (INCLUDING SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS) IN AFRICA THAN DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION. THE CURRENT PRIORITIES LAID OUT BY SARAH -- CONFRONTING ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM, PROMOTION REGIONAL RECONCILIATION, AND ENCOURAGING GOVERNMENTAL REFORM AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT -- ALL TRACK CLOSELY WITH U.S. OBJECTIVES IN AFRICA. THEY SUGGEST THAT WE CAN SECURE IMPORTANT SUPPORT FOR U.S. POLICIES IN THESE AREAS FROM THE HOLY SEE.
NICHOLSON

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